

Hope and Peace :
 In Two
LETTERS:

The Former a **LETTER**

To a Person

Troubled in Mind ;

Who, (though a Vertuous Lady, yet) laboured under great Scrupulosities, Doubts and Fears ; and some uneasie degrees of Desperation.

The Other,

A **Letter to a PENITENT :**

Who appearing Sincere, and having pass'd through the Evangelical Methods of Peace and Reconciliation, yet remain'd Dissatisfied.

By a Divine, and sincere Son of the Church of *England*, as by Law Establish'd.

LONDON, Printed by J. L. for H. Bonwicke, at the Red Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1701.

Thom. Parker.

Hope and Peace:

In Two

LETTERS:

The former a Letter

To a Friend

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and Reconciliation, yet remain

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of England, as by Law established.

LONDON, Printed by J. D. for M. Baskett.
The Year 1721. 2s. 6d. (5s. 6d. 1721)

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TO THE
Holy, Undivided and Eternal
TRINITY.

O My Father, my Redeemer,
my Comforter, my God,
my Love, upon my bended Knees,
and from my most inflamed Af-
fections, I humbly Dedicate this
little Tract to thee, to thy Glory,
and thy Love ; most Passionately,
in all Humility, desiring, that
this, or some other Offices
which thou shalt choose for me, or
employ me in, I may not only
glorifie thee, Love thee, and
obey thee my self, (which above

all things I desire to do) but may
be a means in thy Hand, and
by thy Divine Designation, that
very many of my Christian Bre-
thren may do so too, before
leave Mortality.

I desire and design by this
Treatise, (upon which I humbly
beg thy Influence, O Blessed Spi-
rit,) that thou mayest be true-
ly fear'd; and not only fear'd, but
lov'd; and not only lov'd, but
obey'd; and by being all of these
mayest be glorified; and my Bre-
thren comforted, directed, and
assisted here, and may be saved
in the Day of the Lord Jesus
Amen, Amen.

A Pr

A

Prefatory Apology

To all the

MINISTERS

Of the

Church of England.

My dear Brethren and Fathers,

I Am very sensible how justly
you may think that my set-
ting Rules, or giving Dire-
ctions to any of you, (as you
may think I do in the Fourth
Section) will need a better De-
fence than I am able to make.

But

But I make no question of your
Pardon, when I have assured
you, that the Priest's Part of
Office is not mentioned so
much to be a Direction to any
of you, who do so little need
it, as to the Penitent; that he
may plainly see and know
what he ought to say and do
and know how he may most
piously and devoutly demean
himself in his Penitential Ad-
dresses and Applications to God
and You, when he comes to
beg your Advice, your Con-
duct and your Absolution.

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THE
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The business of my Sixth Head shall be to remove the Fears you are sometimes under, lest you should not sufficiently believe there is a God. And under this Head to give you a Support for weariness and Temptations.

S E C T. VII.

You are not to be displeased with your self, you are sometimes dull and heavy; nor to be vexed and angry, because sometimes you do not find those Pleasures in Religious Duties which you do at other times, or have done formerly.

S E C T. VIII.

Two Prayers for Persons Troubled with a Mind.

A Letter to a Penitent, who appearing sincere, and having pass'd through the Evangelical Methods of Peace and Reconciliation yet Remain'd Dissatisfy'd.

Ho

A

LETTER TO A LADY.

*To the Vertuous and Excellent
Lady, Madam U. P.*

Honoured Madam,

THERE is scarce any thing
so welcome an Imployment
to me, as an Opportunity of
doing my Master's Work, in
those Instances wherein I am very
like to be successful: And I shall my
self receive a great Joy at the re-
soud, if I may disperse your unrea-
sonable

A Letter to a Lady

sonable *Fears*, that you may serve the Lord with gladness, Psal. 100. 2 and give him a very chearful Obedience (which he so much loves) for the remainder of your Life. Though neither would I give you an unsecure Confidence, and a false Peace.

Madam, I must, by way of Introduction to what follows, request you, for the present, to lay aside the Notion of absolute and irrelative Election and Reprobation; or the Opinion of the unconditionate Decrees of God, (as 'tis held by the Method of the Presbyterian way) if you have entertained it.

As also their Notion of the certainty of Salvation, so as not to look upon it to be a Duty. For (as the

* Life of Blest'd Bishop * Taylor truly says
Christ, to be certainly perswaded of our present
Part 3. Condition is not a Duty
Sect. 13. Sometimes it is not possible, and
N. 5. sometimes 'tis better to be otherwise

But yet when a Person of your great

great Sanctity of Life has considered what follows, I do not doubt, but you will receive a great Joy, a cheerful Hope, an humble Confidence, a pious Serenity and Tranquillity of Mind, and a Religious Peace.

One of the Eight things following (or all of them in Conjunction) will, I hope, procure them; which I shall not offer to you from my own Head and Hand only: There shall not be very much that shall be my own, besides the Methodizing and Collection of the Particulars: And that too from the greatest Luminaries of this part of the Christian Church, whom you may securely trust; and who now sit in their Orbs of Glory, and “ shine among their Brethren Stars, that in their several Ages gave Light to the World, and turn’d many Souls to Righteousness.

I

First, I shall lay down some Re-

B 2

medies

A Letter to a Lady,

medies against any degrees of Desperation, or an uncomfortable Progress in Religion, and the Divine Love.

II.

Secondly, Shew what Sins are consistent with a Regenerate Estate, and what those are that are not.

III.

Thirdly, How we may best know that our Repentance is true, and our Sins pardoned.

IV.

If at any time you should find your Conscience Troubled with any weighty matter, and should desire the Absolution of a Wise and Holy Guide of Souls, I shall give you a Form and Method for Holy Confession.

V.

Give you a Remedy against entertaining and cherishing slight and unnecessary Scruples, or against Scrupulosity.

VI.

I shall endeavour to remove the Fears you are sometimes under, lest you should not sufficiently believe there is a God ; and under this Head, give you a support for weariness in Temptations.

VII.

That you are not to be displeased with your self if you are sometimes dull and heavy ; nor to be vexed and angry, because sometimes you do not find those Pleasures in Religious Duties, which you do at other times, or have done formerly.

VIII.

Leave with you two Prayers fitted for Persons Troubled in Mind. One of these Eight Things will (I hope) relieve you.

SECT.

S E C T. I.

*Remedies against any degrees of
Desperation, or an uncomfortable
Progress in Religion, and
in the Divine Love.*

1. **N**EVER let us entertain such
evil and jealous Thoughts
of God, as we do of an angry Man.
That he takes all possible Advantage
and Occasions against us to Damn us.
What dishonourable Thoughts are
these of him, whose Wisdom, and
Mercy, and Goodness are infinite.
'Tis impossible (methinks) did we
duly consider what a wonderful
course he took to save us, what
stupendious Contrivance he laid, to
reconcile his Justice with his Mercy
to Penitents, by the Death of his Son.
it seems, I say, impossible when these
things are considered with a close and

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piercing Thought, that we should be able to have such suspicions of him ; of him we love, and of him that took such great care that we might be fitted to be loved by him eternally.

2. If God did so much for you before you could beg or ask it, or knew you needed it ; what will he not do for you when you so passionately beg it, and that too in the endearing Name of Jesus ?

3. If God has *no pleasure in the death of a sinner* ; nay, if *there be joy in Heaven at the Conversion of one*, why should we our selves make a Discord in that Harmony, and not rejoice with them, when we know we desire and resolve to retain no one known sin whatever ? 'Twas a great Father of the Church, a great Sinner, and a great Penitent, that said, *Doleat homo Christianus, & de dolore gaudeat* ; Let the Christian indeed grieve, but then let him rejoice that he has done so.

4. Pray consider, Madam, since

Bishop
Taylor's
Holy Dy-
ing. Ser.
5. Chap. 5.

God uses infinite Arts and Instru-
ments to reconcile us to himself ;
sent his Son to die for us ; his Spirit to
guide us ; his Angels to be our Guar-
dians ; his Ministers and Messen-
gers to warn and mind us continually
of his love to Man-kind ; nay, to take
us by the Hand and assist us and con-
duct us up to him : can we think other-
wise than that he is infinitely will-
ing to have us saved ? Now, since cer-
tainly he is desirous to save us, as ap-
pears by all this ; as also we are assured
by his Word, by his Oaths, by his very
Nature, and Miracles of Mercy ; it is
not likely that he will condemn us
without great provocations of his
Majesty, and perseverance in them.

5. The Covenant of the Gospel is
a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and
of Repentance ; and seeing 'twas esta-
blished with so many great Solemn-
ties and Miracles from Heaven, it
must signifie a huge and mighty Fa-
vour ; which it could not be, if ever

litt

little slip, or frailty, or imperfection, or sin, did put us out of the Covenant : under the Protection of which Covenant many hundreds of Persons are safe, that fear exceedingly.

6. In our Baptism we entred into the Condition of Repentance ; and therefore it ought to be certain that no man despair of Pardon, but he that hath voluntarily renounced his Baptism. He that sticks to it and still professes the Religion, and approves the Faith, and endeavours to obey God and to do his Duty, this Person hath all the veracity of God to assure him, and give him confidence, that his Case is very hopeful.

7. Madam, it seems you are afraid of your State. Now pray consider, the more you fear, the more plain you hate that sin that is the cause of it ; and therefore such fears are good Instruments of *Grace*, and good signs of a future *Pardon*.

8. Your Fears and Tremblings proceed

A Letter to a Lady

proceed from an eager desire of Grace, and a desire to please God. Now 'tis a certain Rule, That one great sign of Grace is a desire of Grace: So that your very Fears give you a great cause of Joy.

9. Be pleased, Madam, seriously to consider, that God in the Old Law, although he made a Covenant of perfect Obedience, and did not promise Pardon at all after great sins; yet he did give Pardon, and that to the greatest sins and sinners; to David, to Manasses, to Apostacy and Idolatry. And if so, O what will he please to do under the Gospel, where he hath established the whole sum of Affairs upon *Faith* and *Repentance* and *sincere* (not perfect) *Obedience*?

10. There is only one sin declared not to be forgiven, *the sin against the Holy Ghost*; which was the sin of the Pharisees, who, as our Saviour tells us, Blasphemed the Holy Ghost in ascribing those great Miracles

which

Troubled in Mind.

11

ce, which they saw him work, and
ow which he really wrought by the
eat Spirit of God, to the Power of the
So Devil.

Or in other words 'tis thus : By the
Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost must be
ostly understood, according to the Con-
Old text, that of imputing the Operation
of the Spirit in Miracles to the Devil,
not which is therefore so heinous, because
ins is an Expression of the greatest Con-
tempt of it, and a Bar against the be-
Dawing perswaded by it.

and As for your full Satisfaction in this
ll he particular, 'tis certain no man com-
here its a sin against the Holy Ghost, if
n of he be afraid he hath, and desires that
ance he had not : for such Penitential Pas-
ce ? sions are against the Definition of
clar that sin.

ainst 11. All the Exhortations of Scrip-
in of re, perswading Men to *Repentance*,
vious to be *afflicted*, and *mourn* ; to Con-
hoft sion of sins and the like, are most
acles re Testimonies of God's purpose
which and

A Letter to Lady

and desire to forgive us, even when we fall after Baptism.

12. The very Nature and Design of the Gospel supposes *sincerity*, and not *Perfection* here. Madam, it may be you are troubled that you are not *Perfect*; that is, that you are not an Angel, or one of the *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*; which sure 'tis not possible for you to think you should be while you are cloathed upon with this Body; till the Curtain be drawn aside, and you be admitted to the bless'd Society of the upper World.

13. Madam, I know you are a Person that love God; but still you are afraid that your Faith is not such as it ought to be; or you are troubled that there are difficulties in Religion, whose depths you cannot fathom, and some objections which you cannot answer; and you have frequently some Doubts and Fears touching your Faith.

But there is no doubt but the
 tender Dispositions, and Pliant Na-
 ures, and Devotional Tempers of
 People less knowing than your self,
 will make up a greater number in
 Heaven, than the severe, and wary,
 and enquiring People, who some-
 times love because they believe, and
 believe because they can demonstrate,
 but never believe because they love.

* Life of
 Christ,
 Part 3.
 ad Sect. 16.
 N. 11.

14. We cannot think or speak
 good things of God, if we entertain
 unreasonable Fears, and evil Suspi-
 cions of the Mercies of the Father of
 our Lord Jesus. And he that will not
 quench the smoking Flax, nor break
 the bruised Reed; that is, will not deal
 rigidly but Mercifully with those
 that have fallen; does not tie us to
 perfection, and the Laws and Mea-
 sures of Heaven upon Earth; Or, as
 said before, does not require a Per-
 fect, but will graciously accept of an
 angelical and Sincere Obedience.

15. And pray, let not those two
 Places

Places in the *Hebrews*, any longer hinder the Chearfullness of your New Obedience ; or dispirit you in your Holy Resolutions ; or Discourage your Repentance, which you say should be joyfully Sincere and Heartily universal and Persevering if you were but once sure that They did not Reach you : As you may from me assure your self they do not I mean,

1. That of *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost ;*

And have tasted the good word of God, and the Powers of the World to come,

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance &c.

2. That other place of *Heb.* 26. *For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more*

offer sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearfull
looking for of Judgment, &c.

Oh how Holy, how watchfull,
how you, should your Life be for the
future; how Joyfull, sincere, univer-
sal, constant and persevering, should
your obedience be could you be but
Thy certain'd, that these Texts, did not
reach your Case.

With what joy, then would you for-
ever go on in all your Holy Duties;
constant Devotion, constant Alms
and Charities, constant Sacraments:
and look upon a Temptation with
contemtn and Abhorrence. Could you
be sure of this; how dead would you
be it at your Feet.

With what Celestial Care, and
that great encouragement, say you,
could you go on in a Seraphic Pu-
rity, Probity and Sanctity of Life,
then.

Thus you sometimes sigh Piously.
To this I Answer: I do then As-
sure you, Madam, once for all, That
they

they do not in the least belong to the Penitent Believer, and Lover of the Lord Jesus, continuing in the Unity and Communion, Obedience, and Peace of his Church.

For as well the First, of these places where 'tis said, *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, If they shall fall away, &c.*

As the Second of them, where 'tis said, *If he sin willfully, &c.* most certainly Signify the obstinate defection or falling off from Christ; the denying and renouncing of Him, Apostatizing from Him; or the forsaking Christianity.

A Thing you are so far from, that I know you can, and I believe you do often say to Him with St. Peter *Lord, thou knowest that I Love thee* Madam, I could add more to this Purpose, but I suppose that less than this duly weighed, would bring to a Profession of less Sanctity of Life than yourself, a cheerful Obedience, a Holy Love, and a Religious Peace.

S E C

SECT. II.

What Sins are consistent with a Regenerate Estate.

BUT because some devout Persons, notwithstanding all Considerations of the State of Imperfection here, are apt to estimate their Piety by the Measures of Perfection and the Life of Angels; I am to assure you, that some sins are consistent or compatible with a Regenerate Estate, and they are these :

See Dr.
Hammonds
Pract. Car.
Lib. 4.
Sect. 3.

1. Sins of Infirmary.

2. Of Ignorance, (which may come under the Head of Infirmary.)

3. Sins of sudden Surreption, or those which we fall into unawares.

4. Such as by daily Incurision of Temptations (though constantly resisted, yet) through the length of the Work, and our frailty, and Satan's vigilance sometimes are gained from

C

All

All these, where the Repentance cannot well be particular, are by general Repentance (that is, humbling our selves before God for them, begging God's Pardon in Christ, and labouring against them more diligently for the future) reconcileable with a Regenerate Estate: these are spots but they are spots of Sons, though they be never totally overcome in this Life.

5. Nay further, some one wilful Act of deliberate sin, which we might have resisted, if it be presently retracted with Contrition and Confession, and reinforcing of our Resolution and Vigilance against it, and so not favoured or indulged unto, may be also reconcileable with a Regenerate State, so far, as not wholly to quench the Spirit of God, to cause Spiritual Desertion, though it *grieve that Spirit*, waste the Conscience, wound the Soul, and provoke God's Displeasure (from which no

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thing but hearty Repentance can deliver us) and commonly bring some Temporal Judgment upon us.

In short, these (and these only) are unreconcilable with a Regenerate State which are not consistent with an honest Heart, or sincere endeavour ; particularly these two, Hypocrisy and Custom of any sin. In all which cases I do not question but your Conscience speaks Peace to you.

S E C T. III.

How we may best know that our Repentance is true, and our sins pardoned.

IT being possible that after all your Repentance, your Doubts and Fears are great touching your Pardon; I shall give you a certain Rule by which you may make a Judgment of the truth of your Repentance ; and 'tis this : C 2 Because

A Letter to a Lady

Bishop
Taylor's
Sermon of
Godly
Fear. p. 76.

Because the worst of Evils, which are threatned to us, are such which consign to Hell by persevering in sin: as God takes off our love and our affections, our Relations and Bondage under sin, just in the same degree he pardons us; because the Punishment of sin being taken off and pardoned, there can remain no Guilt. Guiltiness is an insignificant word, if there be no Obligation to punishment. Since therefore Spiritual Evils and Progressions in sin, and the Spirit of Reprobation and Impenitence, and accursed Habits, and perseverance in Iniquity, are the worst of Evils; when these are taken off, the sin hath lost its Venom and appendant Curse: For sin passes on to eternal Death only by the line of Impenitency and it can never carry us to Hell if we Repent timely and effectually: In the same degree therefore that any Man leaves his sin, just in the same degree he is pardoned, and he is sure of it.

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For although curing the Temporal evil was the pardon of sins among the Jews, yet we must reckon our pardon by curing the Spiritual. If I have sinned against God in the shameful Crime of Lust, then God hath pardoned my sins; when, upon my Repentance and Prayers, he hath given me the Grace of Chastity. My drunkenness is forgiven, when I have acquired the Grace of Temperance and a Sober Spirit. My Covetousness shall be no more a damning sin, when I have a loving and charitable Spirit, loving to do good and despising the World: For every further degree of sin being a nearer step to Hell, and by consequence the worst punishment of sin; it follows inevitably, that according as we are put into a contrary state, so are our degrees of Pardon, and the worst punishment is already taken off.

So that the case is plain; just as we leave our sins, so Gods Wrath shall

shall be taken from us; as we get the Graces contrary to our former Vices, so infallibly we are consigned to Pardon. If therefore we are in Contestation against sin, while we dwell in difficulty, and sometimes yield to sin, and sometimes overcome it, our Pardon is uncertain, and is not discernable in its Progress; but when sin is mortified, and our lusts are dead, and under the power of Grace, and we are led by the Spirit, all our Fears, concerning our State of Pardon, are causeless, and afflictive without reason. And now, Madam, I am very confident, that all this Discourse can speak nothing else to you, but Peace.

SECT. IV.

A Method for Holy Confession.

Madam,

I Am far from pressing this upon you, with Arguments of a necessity

sit

get *it* for it, as if no Salvation could be
 mer obtained without it, as those of the
 ned Church of *Rome* do. But 'tis certain
 in some Pious Persons have found great
 we Consolation, and Serenity, and Tran-
 mes quility, and Peace of Mind from a
 some *right use of it*: Others there are that
 d is would make use of it if they knew
 but how; or, had a Rule and Method
 usts for it. And 'tis certain there is a great
 r of deal of Piety and Safety in it; and it
 irit would leave an unknown Peace, and
 te of Joy, and Relief behind it to some
 tive Tender and Devout Tempers.

am But I shall only give a Rule or
 Dis Way for doing it, and I do by no
 you means urge it upon you as of absolute
 and indispensable necessity to Pardon
 and Salvation.

m. This only I say, That if ever you
 should think fit, to unload any weigh-
 ty burthen of Conscience, to a Pru-
 dent and Holy Guide of Souls, and
 desire his Absolution; it may be done
 as follows.

Supposing then that a day or two before your *Private Penitential Humiliations* in your Closet be over ; in a *Fasting-day*, (or part of a day kept for that purpose) when you come into the Church, or Chappel, or Room where you appoint to meet the Minister, you are to *kneel down* as making your Confession to God more than to *him*.

When you are upon your knees before your Confession, the Minister will, very likely, pray with you, and for you, in some such short, but excellent Prayers as these :

Minister.

PRevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee we may glorifie thy holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A L

A Lmighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the Inspiration of thy holy spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy Name, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Lmighty and everlasting God, who hateth nothing that he hath made, and doth forgive the sins of all them that are Penitent, create and make in you a new and contrite heart, that you worthily lamenting your sins, and acknowledging your wretchedness, may obtain of him, the God of all Mercy, Perfect Remission and Forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

G Rant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful People, Pardon and Peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus

A Letter to a Lady

Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

When the Minister has thus, or in like manner, prayed for you, I would advise you, being still upon your knees to have your Common-Prayer-Book ready, and in it a written Paper, containing a Catalogue or Note of those things that most burthen you, (for I know you can read and write.)

All things being thus prepared, say first this general Confession, thus :

Penitent.

IN the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all Men ; I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, which I from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy Wrath and Indignation against me. I do earnestly

I repent, and am heartily sorry for
these my misdoings. The remem-
berance of them is grievous unto me ;
the burthen of them is intolerable.
Have mercy upon me, have mercy
upon me, most merciful Father : for
thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
(forgive me all that is past ; and grant
that I may ever hereafter serve and
please thee in newness of life, to the
honour and glory of thy Name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

More particularly, I confess to
Almighty God, and to you
my Ghostly Father, That I have
grievously offended God, through my
fault, my exceeding great fault by the
name of * ——— but I accuse, and judge,
condemn my self ; God be mer-
ciful to me a sinner.

* Here
mention
the Sin.

Priest.

Amen.

Confess to Almighty God, and
to you my Ghostly Father, That
I have frequently offended God,
through

through my fault, my exceeding great
 fault, by the Sin of * — but I ac-
 cuse, I judge, I shame, I condemn my
 self; God be merciful to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

Or if any Person have been at Confession before, then he may speak thus

I Confess to Almighty God, and
 to you my Ghostly Father, That
 [since my last Confession] I have of-
 fended God, through my fault, my
 exceeding great fault, by the Sin
 of * — but I accuse, I judge, I con-
 demn my self; God be merciful
 to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

*When the Person after this manner, has
 mentioned the sins, that most burthen
 and grieve the Conscience, he should set
 up all in these or the like words.*

OF these, and all tendencies
 to these, or to any sins whatever
 Of all Recessions from my Baptism

Purification

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purity and Innocence, of all the De-
fects of my Repentances, particular-
ly of this my Confession ; Of all my
useful or irregular Thoughts, Words,
Actions, known or secret ; all my
errors, whether of Faith or Life, [*
Doctrine if you are a Minister.]
all Violations of my Duty to God,
my self, or Neighbour, whether of
omission or Commission, whatsoever
they are, or whatsoever they are Re-
cordered, whether in my own Con-
science, or in any Record that may
be proved against me in the Day of
Judgment ; I accuse, and judge, and
condemn my self for them
; God be merciful to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

And as I am heartily sorry for the
Love of God, for having disobeyed
Compassionate Father, a Crucified
Father, and grieved the Holy Spirit ;
and as I heartily purpose, by Divine
Assistance, a Life of future Love and
Obedi-

A Letter to a Lady

Obedience ; so I pant, I sigh, I languish for his Pardoning Mercy, and his Grace, and earnestly beg your Prayers for me, your Absolution. *When you who are the Penitent have sincerity of heart said this, the Minister (you will find) will Pray for you, and Absolve you in this (or like) manner following.*

Minister.

O Lord, we beseech thee, mercifully hear our Prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee, that they whose Conscience by sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be Absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty Repentance and true Faith, turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all good

...la...ss, and bring you to everlasting
...an...se, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

you men

...on. Then the Minister laying his right hand
...ve... on your head Absolves you (if he see
Min...) thus :

O UR Lord Jesus Christ, who
hath left power to his Church
to absolve all sinners who truly repent
and believe in him, of his great mer-
cy forgive thee thine offences; and
by his Authority committed to me, I
absolve thee from all thy sins, In the
Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Priest.

The Collect.

O Most merciful God, who ac-
cording to the multitude of
thy mercies, dost so put away the
Reproaches of those who truly repent, that
thou rememberest them no more;
open thine eye of mercy upon this
thy servant, who most earnestly de-
sireth pardon and forgiveness. Re-

new

new in *him* (most loving Father
 whatsoever hath been decayed by the
 fraud and malice of the Devil, or by
his own carnal will and frailness
 preserve and continue *him* in the uni-
 ty of the Church; consider *his* con-
 trition, and accept *his* tears. And
 forasmuch as he putteth *his* full trust
 only in thy mercy, impute not to *him*
his former sins; but strengthen *him*
 with thy blessed Spirit, and receive
him into thy favour, through the me-
 rits of thy most dearly beloved Son
 Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Minister.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Penitent.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Penitent.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Minister.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

Penitent.

And let our cry come unto thee.

Minister.

O UR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

O Lord, I beseech thee, absolve this thy servant from *his* offences, that through thy bountiful goodness *he* may be delivered from the bands of those sins which by *his* frailty *he* has committed; Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Lmighty and everlasting God, who is always more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; pour down upon you the abundance

D

bundance of his mercy; forgiving you those things whereof your Conscience is afraid, and giving you those good things which you are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LORD, I beseech thee, grant this thy servant grace to withstand the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and with a pure heart and mind to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctifie, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments, that through thy most mighty protection both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE

THE Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you Peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

Although this, Madam, would be a good Method for Holy Confession, and such as I my self have made use of; and have found, by my own experience, the result of it to be this: That it leaves Peace, and Joy and a great Tranquility of Mind behind it; and to be a wonderful encouragement to a good life: yet I must again say, I do not urge it upon you, as if it were of such moment, that Salvation could not be attained without it; (for I doubt not, but that the business may be acceptably transacted between God and the Soul alone) but I mention these Directions, if ever you should think fit to try what that Peace and Joy, that sedate and comfortable frame of Soul is, which it would leave behind it.

SECT. V.

A Remedy against entertaining and cherishing slight and unnecessary Scruples; or, against Scrupulosity.

TIS very possible, Madam, that a Person of your Tenderneſs of Conſcience may (and I believe you ſometimes do) give way to ſome needleſs Scruples, whereby they are apt exceedingly to increaſe upon you.

If this be your caſe, then be pleaſed to conſider theſe expreſs words of the moſt Judicious Biſhop* *Sanderſon*.

What is to be done (ſays he)
 ‘when the Conſcience is *Scrupulous*?
 ‘I call that a *Scruple*, when a Man is
 ‘reaſonably well perſwaded of the
 ‘*lawfulneſs of a thing*, yet hath with-
 ‘al ſome jealousies and fears leaſt per-
 haps

* Biſhop
Sanderſon's
 Judgment
 in one
 View,
 p. 166.

haps it should prove *unlawful*.

Such Scruples are most incident to Men of Melancholy Dispositions, or of Timorous Spirits; especially if they be tender Conscienced withal; and they are much increased by false Suggestions of Satan, by reading the Books, or hearing the Sermons, or frequenting the company of Men more strict, precise, and austere in sundry Points, than they need or ought to be; and by sundry other means which I now mention not.

Of which Scruples it behooveth every Man, *First*, to be very wary that he do not at all admit them, if he can chuse; or if he cannot wholly avoid them, that, *Secondly*, he endeavour, so far as may be, to eject them speedily out of his thoughts, as Satan's snares, and things that may breed him worser inconveniences: Or if he cannot be so rid of them, then, *Thirdly*, he

'resolve to go on according to the
 'more profitable Perswasion of his
 'Mind, and despise those Scruples.
 'And this he may do with a good
 'Conscience, not only in things com-
 'manded him by lawful Authority,
 'but even in things indifferent and ar-
 'bitrary, and wherein he is left to
 'his own liberty.

These are the very words of that excellent Prelate.

Sometimes, it seems, your Doubts
 and Scruples are of another sort.
 You find so many Religions, or ra-
 ther Differences of Opinion about Re-
 ligion, in the World, and especially
 in this our Kingdom, that you some-
 times waver, and do not only
 doubt whether it be best to continue
 a Member of this excellent Church in
 which you received your Baptism;
 but if you should desert us, you
 know not where to fix.

Madam,

Troubled in Mind.

39

* Second
Winter-E-
vening
Confe-
rence, p.
211. By
Dr. Good-
man.

Madam, in answer to this, * I'll tell you a Religion that all the World shall agree in, and my Soul for yours, you shall be safe if you will comply with it. It is no more but this : Live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World : Or if you will have it in other words, resolve with your self not to do that thing, whatever come of it, that you cannot answer to God, and your own Conscience ; and do every thing within your power, that may approve and recommend you to both ; and thence forward fear not a day of Judgment. And for doing this, you have as great advantages in your Mother Church, as you will meet with any where in the World beside.

There is besides, a sort of Scrupulous Divinity, which, I have some reason to believe, has been apt to hinder your Tranquility of Mind, and brought you some Disquiet.

* *Id. ib.*
p. 214.

* It is asserted by some Casuists and must thing God m ca ercise
That in things certain and indisputa-
ble, it is a Man's duty to do that
which is best of the kind ; and in un-
certain and controverted cases, to
take the surer side.

Now if these things were laid in th
down as prudential Advices only, to Recre
direct a Man which way to incline endle
himself, they were very useful; but whet
to make them express measures of Man
Duty, is to make more laws than thillin
God hath made, and condemn more three
things for sin, than he condemns; day ;
and therefore must needs imbroid the hours
Consciences of Men. For suppose about
Prayer be better than Secular business, ulties
then upon this Principle I must turn Troub
Euchite, and spend all my time in De- ve ev
votion. Suppose there be fewer to no
Temptations in a Monastick Life way
than in common Conversation, then etter
every one that is careful of his Soul, o ev
must retire into a Cloyster. If there urn
be difficulties attending Magistracy then
and

and publick Employment, then I
must fold up my Arms, and do no-
thing but go into my Cell, and pray
God to mend the World, though I
am call'd to the other. If bodily Ex-
ercises and Games have some Snares
in them, I must allow my self no
Recreations; nay, I shall be put
endlessly and anxiously to dispute,
whether it be better to give a poor
Man two-pence, or a shilling, or five
shillings, &c. Whether I shall pray
three times a day, or seven times a
day; whether an hour, or two
hours. And indeed every thing I go
about, will afford inextricable diffi-
culties, upon these Principles—
Trouble your self no further than to
live every day well, and to be sure to
do nothing you cannot answer; be
always getting ground, and growing
better and better; as near as you can,
do every day something that may
turn to Account another day; and
then comfortably await God's time.
But

But possibly your Scruples and Doubts, and Fears arise from other Grounds.

Dr. Good-
man's Pe-
nitent Par-
doned,
p. 50.

Some honest and well meaning but timorous, Persons, not thinking it sufficient for their security, that neither the Law of Nature, nor any express Divine or Humane Law disallow their Actions, are afraid of their own Shadows, and suspect sin and danger, they know not why nor whence. Now would such Persons be induced to consider, that *lawful* and *unlawful* are Relative Terms, and respect some definite Rule or other, which must determine any Action to be this or that; that God is well pleased that his laws be observed, and is not so severe and rigid as to oblige us negatively; that is, that we shall do nothing but what he commands; that there is a great Field of Liberty between express sin and express Duty, and in that we may walk without offence; that all

Actions

and tions are good within that scope,
other and though some may be much bet-
er than others, yet none are evil
ning that touch not upon the bounds and
aking limits of Law : If, I say, these
that things were considered, these honest
any minds would be undeceived,
w diff If none of the foregoing Confide-
id o tions will abate your Scrupulosity,
Et fin then I would, by all means, advise
y not ou, to make known your Doubts
ersons and Fears, to some Judicious, Dis-
lawful meet and Devout Minister of Religi-
erms n. But here, I know, new Doubts
le o will start up, Madam, whether you
e any ay safely acquiesce in his Judgment
e Good Determination? Whether he do
bber ot speak for Favour and Affection,
gid as and whether the Case and State of
, that our Soul be not worse than he takes
at he to be? And you'll always fear he is
great mistaken. But supposing he be a
els fin person so qualified as I have mentio-
at we ed; then take the words of Bishop
at allaylor, and that Seraphick Prelate
tions will

will tell you, That you not only
may, but *ought* to acquiesce in his

Taylor. Determination. — ‘He that
Duff. dub. ‘troubled with Scruples, *ought* to re
B. 1. Ch. ‘ly upon the Judgment of a Prudent
6. Rul. 3. ‘Guide.

Id. Duff. ‘And that the Sentence and Arbitra-
dub. Book ‘trament of a Prudent and Good
1. Ch. 4. ‘Man, though it be of it self but proba-
Rul. 15. ‘bable, yet is more than a probable
‘warranty to Actions otherwise un-
‘determinable.

SECT

S E C T. VI.

The business of my Sixth Head shall be to remove the Fears you are sometimes under, lest you should not sufficiently believe there is a God. And under this Head, to give you a Support for weariness in Temptations.

Madam,

YOU do sometimes tell me, That you *do not know* whether there be a God, and that you are in the dark about it.

But, I am sure, you do most firmly believe it: and that's enough in this our present State and Condition. I know you keep most strictly and constantly to your Duties; which shews that you cannot possibly doubt of the being of a God. You plainly shew your Faith (the truth of which you some-

sometimes doubt of)by your Obedience, which is the best way of shewing it in the whole World.

Ay, but how glad should you (say you) could you have but a glimpse of him here in this life? and a Revelation (though but for a little time) of his Glories.

Madam, for many reasons 'tis not fit we should desire it; nay, 'tis better for us we should be without it here. This would destroy one great Duty of our Religion, which is Faith. For it would be no longer Faith, then, but Vision, or Beholding: how should we then be crowned and rewarded for our believing, when we could not possibly chuse but believe? How is it possible we could have any Title to that Blessing which our Saviour speaks of? *Blessed they which have not seen, and yet have believed, St. John 20. 29.*

And would you willingly lose the Rewards of your Faith? Would

Obediently be no longer a Believer?
For 'tis certain you would then no
longer be a *Believer*, but a *Beholder*,
Should God manifest his Glories to
you here in this Life.

To behold him will be one great
part of our Reward in the other
World: But this you would willing-
'tis you have here: that is, you would
'tis willingly have your Reward before
it he you have done your Work. You
at D would be recompensed long before
s F your Day be over. You would wil-
r F willingly be admitted to *enjoyment* be-
ng: fore God sees that you have been long
wned enough a *Believer*.

, w A firm Believer I know you are,
e but as I before told you)by the constan-
we c y of your Obedience. You believe
ng wh rmly there is a God: for otherwise
lessed who should make the first Man? 'Tis
yet l certain nothing can produce it self.
You cannot possibly think that the
y lose first Bullock, Horse, or Sheep that e-
ould er was, could arise out of the Earth;
for

for if it were so heretofore at any time, why do we not sometimes see it to be so now? The first *Man*, (I say) the first *Beast*, the first *Fowl* the *Air*; none of these surely could produce themselves, or rise out of the *Earth* by chance; for if they did formerly, 'tis certain they would do so still; and we should see or hear it daily. But because 'tis certain that no *Man* ever did see, or hear of, believe such a thing; 'tis very plain and evident, they must be produced by an infinite Power.

You do plainly find that it can never be any Humane Art or Power that carries about the *Sun* so exactly that it has not varied one Minute of its Course since you can remember or in many hundred Years before. When you see a Clock or Watch though you never saw the Maker of it, yet can you ever think that it made it self, or that it came so together by chance? or that it should

mo

move so orderly without some Hand to frame and set it; You know, that all the World could not perswade you to believe such a thing.

And 'tis altogether as impossible you should doubt, whether the Fa-
brick of the World, and the Motion of the Sun (as well as Moon and Stars) were at first made, and be now guided by an unerring Hand.

Madam, I must tell you, That your very fears, lest you do not sufficiently believe there is a God, are a plain sign that you do firmly believe him to be. For these Fears proceed from an awful regard of him. 'Tis that awful regard of him that makes you afraid to offend him, by not sufficiently believing.

In short, do you believe now there is a God? I know that you believe it: For, as I have twice before observed to you, you shew the firmness of your Faith by the constancy of your Obedience. To desire a glimpse of
E him,

him, or some manifestation of him here, or to see him, is neither safe nor fit for you. For then you would not only lose the Reward of a Believer, and the Crown of Faith, but 'tis what you cannot bear in this imperfect State. *There shall no man see me and live,* says God, *Exod. 23. 20.* 'Tis to anticipate the Joys of Heaven. 'Tis to expect your Wages when you should be doing your Work. I mean 'tis to expect the reward of enjoying while you should be doing the Work of Faith, and believing.

Be content, Madam, to stay a little longer for a clearer Revelation of his Beauty and his Glory. When God has try'd your Faith by your Obedience a little longer, he will suddenly draw aside the Curtain, and let you into the clearer sight of him. But in the mean time, 'tis altogether fit you should (as you do) live in Faith as well as Hope; for as Hope is destroyed by enjoyment, so is Faith

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Faith by Vision or beholding. Till therefore you see him face to face, you ought to be alway willing to have your Faith exercis'd; that so the more 'tis exercis'd here, the greater it's Rewards may be in the Mansions of Glory.

I will conclude this Head by sub-joining the words of an excellent Author——In the case of Religion and a future State, if irresistible evidence were to be had, there would be no room for Vertue; it would then be a necessary Action to believe, and no instance of choice, nor any Argument of a vertuous Mind: For what can be the praise or rewardableness of doing that which a Man cannot chuse but do? or what excellency is there in Faith, when there is no pretence in the World for unbelief?

And as it is with *Faith*, or your *Belief* of a God; just so I find it to be with reference to your Obedience. As you would have no pretence in the

Winter-
Evening
Confe-
rence, p.
159. By
Dr. Good-
man.

World for unbelief; so you would willingly be without all Temptations to disobedience: That is, you would have your Faith no longer exercised, and your Obedience and Divine Love never tryed. But, as I have before demonstrated to you, that 'tis at present better for you, to *believe* than to *behold*; so in the case of Obedience, 'tis better for you, that you be sometimes tempted, or that there should be some difficulty in resisting a Temptation, than it would be if there were none. Which you will most plainly see by what follows.

That we must work out our Spiritual Interest with the labours of our Spirit, seems, to most Men, to be so intolerable, that rather than pass under it, they quit their hopes of Heaven, and pass into the Portion of Devils.

And you may possibly complain thus: What can there be to alleviate this sorrow, that a Man shall be perpetually

Bishop
Taylor's
Sermon
upon *Psal.*
86. 5.

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petually solicited with an impure Tempter, and shall carry a flame within him, and every thing brings Fuel to the Flame; and full Tables are a snare, and empty Tables are collateral servants to a Lust, and help to blow the Fire, and kindle the heat of prepared Temptations; and yet a Man must not at all taste of the forbidden Fruit; and he must not desire what he cannot chuse but desire, and he must not enjoy whatsoever he does violently covet, and must never satisfy his Appetite in the most violent importunities; but must therefore deny himself, because to do so is extremely troublesome. This seems to be an Art of Torture, and a Device to punish Man with the Spirit of Agony, and a restless Vexation.

But this also hath in it a great ingredient of Mercy, or rather is nothing else but a heap of Mercy in its entire Constitution. For if it were not for this, we had nothing of our

own to present to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of Heaven, but either all Men or no Man must go thither; for nothing can distinguish Man from Man in order to Beatitude, but Choice and Election, and nothing can ennoble the Choice but Love, and nothing can exercise Love but Difficulty, and nothing can make that difficulty but the Contradiction of our Appetite and the crossing of our natural Affections,

And therefore, whenever any of you are tempted violently, or grow weary in your Spirits, with resisting the petulancy of Temptation, you may be cured if you will please but to remember and rejoice, that now you have something of your own to give to God, something that he will be pleased to accept, something that he hath given thee that thou mayst give it him; for our Money, our Time, our days of Fasting, and our days of

Sorrow

Sorrow, our Discourse, and our Acts of Praise, our Prayers, our Vows, our Offerings, our Worshippings and Prostrations, and whatsoever else can be accounted in the sum of our Religion, are only accepted according as they bear along with them Portions of our Will and Choice of Love, and appendent difficulty.

Latius est quoties magno tibi constat honestum; that is, the more there is of self-denial in a Vertuous Action, the greater is the evidence of Grace and Divine Love in the performing it. So that whoever can complain that he serves God with Pains and Mortifications, he is troubled because there is a distinction of things, such as we call Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment.

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SECT.

SECT. VII.

You are not to be displeased with your self, if you are sometimes dull and heavy; nor to be vexed and angry, because sometimes you do not find those Pleasures in Religious Duties, which you do at other times, or have done formerly.

IN your melancholy Moods when you are dull and heavy, and find that you are able, to do little or nothing in your Religious Duties as you would; I find you are extreamly troubled, and apt to be afraid that these are evidences of God's Wrath, and tokens of your being consigned to the sorrows of eternity; or (as you sometimes speak) that your day of Grace is past, although you still

keep

Keep to your Religious Duties, and live in no one known Sin or Iniquity.

But let me beseech you, Madam, to be so far from thinking thus, as by no means to think the worse of your self, for this cold heaviness and lumpishness that will sometimes seize

Instead of vexing thoughts for these things, you must consider that your Bodies, being a part of this World, will be liable to those changes which

are in things adjacent to them; as in the very temperature of the Air, the Weather, and the like. And that your Soul, being united to your Body, cannot but feel its changes, just when the House smoaks, the Inhabitant is offended, unless he can creep out of doors.

Besides, it may be God does very seldom see those sensible joys which you formerly had in Religion, to be now so fit for you: And if he do not see

Bishop
Patrick's
Advice to
a Friend,
Chap. 16.

see them fit for you, 'tis not fit you should desire them. Think how unworthy the best of us is, alway to live under the Sun-beams; and there are very many Souls who are in a colder Case than yours, and more remote from the Son of righteousness, whose Condition is safe, and shall be happy.

But however, think that after you have done what you can, it is the Will of God, that you should be as you are; and if this please him, you need not displease you. Probably at this Age, God Almighty sees that your Nature cannot bear always such extraordinary Motions as you have had heretofore. Or, it may be, he will not let you feel those sensible Joys you have formerly had, merely to break your Self Love, which desires nothing but Pleasure in every thing that we do. It may be, 'tis to try whether we will Love him for himself, without those delicate Entertainments, which we have some-

times felt in our Religious Duty: Or
for some other Cause unknown to
you and me, and every Body else.

'Tis very possible, that there may
be sometimes too much of Self-Love
in our vehement desires after the ex-
traordinary Pleasures and Joys of Pie-
ty: and that, if we could be content
(after we had used due diligence)
with our driness and want of vigour,
our dulness and barrenness of Spirit;
nay, with our frailties and faults too,
merely out of submission of God, and
because he thinks not fit to give us
the pleasure of being wholly without
them, it would be highly acceptable
to him, and no less advantageous to
ourselves.

This is not to teach any remissness
in your desires and endeavours, but
it supposes you do your best; and on-
ly advises you, that, if notwithstanding
you cannot be as you would, you
do not let your Spirit fall into any
impatience and fretfulness. For this

is

is to prefer God's Pleasure above your own.

To be pleased in our successes is not so pleasing to God, as to be patient in our Contests. Nay, to rejoice and triumph in our Victories, is nothing so good, as to be constant, and resolved, notwithstanding that we are little overcome. In these Spiritual Consolations which we thirst after we do not always receive so much Profit as we do Pleasure; but in the want of them, if our Wills be thereby more perfectly subdued to his, we receive both a very great Benefit, and in the issue no small pleasure.

You have seen perhaps, or you may imagine, the smoak of a Potter's Furnace; how thick and black it is as if it would make a Picture of Hell itself. Who would think that the Vessels of Clay which are baked there, would not be burnt to Ashes by the fury of the Fire? or that at least they would come out as black as

oot by the foulness of the Smoak?
and yet, when the Fire is put out,
and the Vessels unfurnaced, you see
there is no such thing: but that which
was soft and yielding is become hard
and strong; and its Complexion like-
wise is so much mended, that a Prince
need not disdain the use of some of
these Cups. Just thus it is with a di-
stressed Soul, when it is covered with
Cloud, and wrapt in darkness;
and burns thereby in a great and
displeasure against it self. It is
to think, that this sure is the Gate
Hell; that it is forsaken of God, and
all either perish in this Condition,
not escape out of it, without much
s. But after a while, when the
work of God is done, and the Va-
pours are vanished and disappear, it
finds it self to be grown much in
cleanness, purity, and splendor, and
that it is made a Vessel of Honour, fit
for the Master's use. There is no loss of
anything but of its self-will. Nothing
is

is consumed but its softness and delicacy; which made it loth to be toucht.

However, there is no reason for such Conclusions as those, which good Minds have been apt to make on a gloomy day; that if God love them, he would not treat them after that manner. There is great reason considering what hath been said, to be not only patient, but thankful to him in such a condition.

Madam, while I know you to be a Person of great Vertue, allowing your self in no one known sin, or neglect of no one known Duty; and that none of the Riches, Honours or Pleasures of sin can deceive you, and that it is too late for them to put a Cheat upon one, whose Senses are so well exercised to discern between good and evil; while I know you to be such, I shall subjoin, That you may be abused, it is possible with fears and jealousies of your self

and be cast down when you have no
 list to do any thing that is good, or
 when you mistake, or have commit-
 ted a little fault: but be sure you hold
 fast an unmovable belief of the good-
 ness of God to you. He doth not ex-
 pect Children without all faults, and
 you may be sure cannot be unwilling
 to pardon them, when he knows
 that's the way to encourage them to
 grow better. There is no reason in
 the World to suspect his sincerity,
 when he tells us, *That he desires not*
the death of a sinner: O come my Soul
 say, when he says he has no pleasure
 in our Death, Shall we say he has?
 Shall we think he has? As little
 should we imagine that he secretly
 undermines us, while he openly pro-
 fesses love and friendship to us; or to
 say that he intends to make us the
 tokens and Marks of his meer Pow-
 er and greatness. Believe this, and
 will never let you despond in the
 worst Condition.

The

The top and perfection of that Holy Religion which Christ has taught us is Love and Charity; and that both a Bountiful, and a Meek, and Patient Vertue: 'Tis alway (you know) shewn in *giving* and *forgiving*. And how is it possible you should believe that he who has *given* you as much as he has, out of his mere Goodness and Love, should be unwilling to *forgive* you nothing? That he who has *given* you so much, with reference to this Life and that to come, before you asked it, should be unwilling to forgive you any thing who do so earnestly ask it; nay, and do perform that very Condition upon which he promised to forgive you; mean a *Devout Repentance*.

But if, as I said, Charity be the top of our Religion, if it *suffers long* and *is kind*, if it bears all things, and endures all things; how is it possible, as you think, that God should give you that which is not in himself? or that

he should command us to accomplish our Souls with that Perfection, which is not eminent in his own most excellent Nature? We are sure that our loving-kindness is but a weak Imitation of his. And therefore may conclude, that he will have Patience with us, and not be easily provoked, but bear with our Infirmities, and be exceeding kind in bestowing his Blessings, and Pardoning our Offences, and delight in doing both ; because there is nothing he so much delights to see in us, as this Image of his loving kindness.

Assure your self, it is impossible that he should be out-done by us, or that we should equal him in Tenderness and Compassion ; of which he hath given us such a glorious Instance, in the Son of his Love, Christ Jesus, that we should be very unjust, as well as ungrateful and unkind, if we should not expect more from him, than we would do from the best

F

Friend

Friend in the World.

So that you ought to be confident, whatsoever defects you find in your self, that *he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of our Lord Jesus.* It is but handsome and becoming, that you should have this Opinion of him. Judge by your self and your own good Inclinations, whether you ought not to have such high thoughts of Infinite Love. You owe to him all the good you have, and there is more reason, that he should perfect his own work, than there was that he should begin it.

I shall conclude this Section with this most earnest Advice, That in your most gloomy days, you commit your self to him, in assured hope of his continued Love to you. Be verily perswaded, that he loves you infinitely more, than you love him, and therefore is more desirous than you can be, to see you do well, and continue in well doing to the end.

Wh

Who but he is it that hath hitherto enabled you in your study to live Vertuously, and please him? What should now move him to alter his mind, after such numerous Tokens of his Love? What is it should make him hate us? Will he bear with no weaknesses? or shall a fault that we have committed, wholly alienate his Affection from us? If when we lay in our filthiness he took pity on us, pulled us out of the Mire, and laid us in his Bosom; now that we are washed all over, will he shake us off, and cast us out of his Imbraces, because our Feet (as our Lord speaks) still need some washing? Never entertain such a thought of him, as though he was willing to desert you, and cast you out of his Friendship, now that he hath done so much for you, and you have been so long acquainted. By no means hearken to any jealous thoughts that are but whispered of his Goodness, whatsoever the jealous-

fies be, which you have of your own inconstancy.

And let me advise you to be well satisfied, and well pleased, in the doing of what you ought, though it it prove not so delightful to you as you desire; remembring, that if you do your Duty as constantly now, when you feel not these sweet and sensible Joys, as you did when you had them; they are the more acceptable to God for this. Because *now* there is more of your choice and your will in them, than there was *then*; when you break through all Difficulties, and will not suffer your self to be overborn by the great load that lies upon your Spirits.

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SECT. VIII.

Two prayers for Persons Troubled in Mind.

Madam,

I Shall leave the Use or Omission of these to your own Judgment, according as your *Needs or Devotions* shall incline you.

First Prayer.

O Blessed Lord, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, look down, I beseech thee, in pity and compassion upon me thy afflicted Servant. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess my former iniquities; thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and my Soul is full of trouble: But O merciful God, who hast written thy Holy Word for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of thy Holy Scriptures, might have hope; give

A Letter to a Lady

me a right understanding of my self, and of thy threats and promises, that I may neither cast away my confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give me strength against all my Temptations, and heal all my Distempers. Break not the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver me from fear of the Enemy, and lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me, and give me peace through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Prayer.

O Holy and Eternal God, who art the glorious object of my hopes, and fears, and desires, and loves; look down, I humbly beseech thee, in mercy upon the Soul that thou knowest loves thee; but yet is troubled that it cannot love thee more. Dearest Lord, if my
Faith

Faith or my Repentance, if my love of thee, or my obedience to thee, if my desires to please thee in all things, do not yet fit me to be loved by thee; O be pleased speedily to make them such, or to pardon their defects, and to accept them as the best I can at present perform, for the Merits and Satisfaction of Jesus thy beloved in whom thou art well pleased. O sanctifie and increase my Faith, that it may arise up to the confidence of hope, and to as much peace, and as many sensible joys, as thou seeest fit for me in this vale of Tears.

I know, Lord, that thy ways are past finding out; and that thou hast built our Faith upon thy Promises, and our Hopes upon thy Goodness; and hast described our Paths between the Waters of Comfort, and the dry Barren Land of our own Duties and Affections.

I acknowledge that all my Comforts derive from thee, and to my self I owe all my Shame and Confusion, and degrees of Dissatisfaction. But O thou whom

A Letter to a Lady

my Soul loves, give me, I beseech thee, those Comforts and Visitations of the Holy Ghost, which thou, in thy Infinite and Eternal Wisdom, knowest most apt and expedient to encourage my Duties to entertain my Hopes; to alleviate my Sadnesses; to refresh my Spirits; and to encourage my Progress and constant Endeavours in the strictnesses of Religion and Sanctity. O my Jesu, make me content, and very well pleased, to be without those Joys which thou dost not yet see fit for me. Make me content to stay for them a little longer. O make me content to stay for the Revelation of the Interiour Beauties of thy Kingdom, till I shall be fitted and able to bear it, as well as to enjoy it for Eternity.

In the mean time, dearest Lord, lead me from Grace to Grace; from Imperfection to Strength; from Acts to Habits; from Habits to Confirmation in Grace; that I may pass into the Regions of Comfort; receiving the earnest of the Spirit, and the Adoption of a Child;

Child; that between the Vicissitudes and Changes, of Hopes and Fears; Doubts and Joys; Comforts and Sorrows, my passage home to thee may be Safe and Holy: where all my Doubts, and Fears, and Scruples, and Dissatisfactions shall be removed once for all; where all Sin, and Misery, and Danger, and Imperfection, shall be done away for all Ages. Hear me and relieve me, O Holy and Eternal God, for the sake of Jesus thy beloved. Amen, Amen.

Madam, all that I shall add shall be my Prayers, that some, or one, or all of these Eight Things, or as many of them as you shall, in your devout Retirements, consider and make use of, may be effectual, and turn your Scruples into Devotion; your Fears into Divine Love; and all your Doubts and Dissatisfactions into Holy Joy; a chearful Obedience; great Tranquility of Mind; a sedate

date frame of Soul, and a Religious Peace; that in the Words of the Bless'd Apostle (*Rom. 12. 12.*) you may all along *rejoice in hope*, till your hope be swallowed up in Fruition, and all your Scruples of Conscience be for ever answered, and you expired into the Element of Love for all Futurity.

If you please to put me into your Litanies, you will do a great office of Charity for him who desires that and to believed to be,

Madam,

April
1691.

Your Faithfully devoted Servant

in our Lord Jesus

A Letter

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A
LETTER
TO A
PENITENT,

Who appearing Sincere, and having
pass'd through the Evangelical
Methods of Peace and Recon-
ciliation,

YET
Remain'd Dissatisfy'd.

sent not his Son into the World, to
Condemn the World, but that the World
thro' him might be saved, Joh. iii. 17.

L O N D O N,

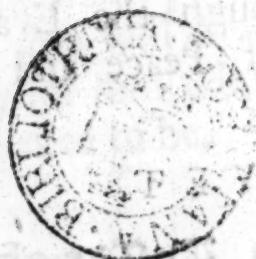
Printed by J. Leake, for Henry Bonwicke,
at the Red Lion in St. Paul's Church-
yard, 1701.

A
LETTER

TO A

FRUITFUL

appearing sincere, and having
to through a spiritual
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from the World, but that the World
of the World, Job. iii. 17.

LONDON

for Henry Bannister
in St. Paul's Church

1701

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LETTER

TO A

PENITENT, &c.

Cousin,

YOU lately desired a *Letter* from me. I suppose you only meant by it (after the *course* we have had) that I would send you an account of *my Thoughts* of the State of your *Soul*; and how *now* stands *dispos'd* and *fitted*, and *prepar'd* for the coming of the Bridegroom, supposing he were to *come* *very shortly*, and how I judge it appears to me, with reference to *Eternity*, and the *Resurrection*?

I shall

I shall therefore send you an Answer, on which you may (thro' Divine Grace) *depend*, and rest *satisfy'd*.

For I would not willingly be *unfaithful* in my Master's Work, to my own Soul, or yours, as give you an *unsecure Confidence*, and a *false Peace*.

Supposing then, that your *Repentance* and *Reformation* are very sincere, and that you have gone thro' the Methods of *Peace* and *Reconciliation*, (thro' which I have assisted and conducted you) with *purity of intention*; that is, with a loving willing Spirit, a Spirit griev'd for your cause you lov'd God, and aim'd only at the *pleasing him*; a *Restoration* to his Favour, a *sincere Reformation*; and designing in all this his *Glory, Love, and Obedience*. Supposing (I say) and Hoping, *Charitably Believing* all this, I may and do then *Pronounce and Assure*

that your Case is very *safe and happy*: And if you persevere and hold on, will be for *ever Happy and Glorious*. I have all the Evidence that I can expect of your *Sincerity*.

Your Pious and your Bitter Tears, that came from your *Broken* and your *Contrite Heart*, your melting *grieving Soul*, your humble and *repenting Spirit*, these holy Tears too thus trickling down your Cheeks, proceeding and issuing (as you told me, and I believe it) *from your love of God*: your *Accusing, Judging and Condemning* your self, your deep and tender sense of your *Recessions from your Baptismal Innocence*, and the ways of God in the Particulars mentioned; your *Penitential Confession*, attended with all the demonstrations of Humiliation, your *Receiving up- on this, the Benefit of Absolution*, from an Ambassador (tho' unworthy) of the Holy Jesus; your having had the Message of Peace from

a Residentiary of Heaven, (as you must own me, who am a Priest of the Holy Catholick Church to be how undeserving soever I am of that great Charge and high Office; your Receiving upon all this, the further Pledges of our Saviour's love in the *Blessed Sacrament* of the *Altar* these are such Methods of *Restitution* for a laps'd Sinner, (supposing the *sincerity* of your *Reformation* and a *new Obedience*) as you may *truly depend on*, as that you are alive and move.

And the whole Gospel it self must be rejected, if these things are not thought proper to restore *your Peace* tho' not without your *Care*, and your *Watch* for the future.

But (to use the Words of a Seraphick and Learned Prelate (now with God) in a like Case) *I see it happens to you as to the most nice Consciences it happens often; you are so fearful of the Evil, that you ne*

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ever think your self Cured, 'till you have forgot that ever you were Sick.

I have therefore a few Things, which (upon supposition still of your Sincerity and Care, and Watch and Perseverance) I would have you frequently to Read and Consider, and to be often turning over some of them in your Thoughts.

I.

1. Instead of looking upon your Saviour (who shall be the Great Judge of Quick and Dead) as you do upon a bitter Enemy, or an angry Man as if he would take all advantages against you that he could, that he might Damn you ; instead of this, ever look upon him to be (what be sure he is) One that will make the Most and the Best of your Case, as all Advocates use to do ; One that will for certain make the Most and the Best of your Repentances,

G

of

of every Sigh, and every Tear, every Alms, and every Sacrament, every Act of Love, and every Act of Obedience; of all that you *do* or *suffer* for him.

Oh! how should this single Consideration raise your *Hopes*, and make your Heart pant with *Love* and *Joy*, and inspire your future Obedience, which is so like to be successful; and disperse your unreasonable *Fears*, and make you go on with *lively* and *cheerful Resolutions*.

II.

Consider if God did so much for you as he has done, before you could *beg* or *desire* it, or knew you *needed* it; O what will he not do for you, when you *sincerely* (tho' with trembling steps) perform the *very Condition* on which he promised it? What will he *not do for you* upon your passionate, your penitential begging it?

III. Af-

III.

Assure your self, a *Repenting Believer* (that has gone through those *Methods of Reconciliation* that you have done, and which I before mentioned, which appear to me to be sincere,) is as free from the Charge of the Law, as *Innocent Angels*.

IV.

Be often (supposing the sincerity of your Reformation) thinking of those words of that most Judicious, Exact and Excellent Writer, the Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, when he speaks of Hope,

It is strange Folly for any Man, be he never so Sinful, to give up himself for lost, when, if he will but change his Course, he shall be as certain to partake of the Promises of Mercy, as if he had never gone on in those former Sins.

V.

If God has no pleasure in the death of a Sinner, if there be *Joy in the presence of the Angels of God*, at the Conversion of One, what infinite Cause have you to *rejoyce* with them, that you have pass'd so *safely* and *happily*, and with so much pious Courage thro' the Methods of *Peace, Pardon* and *Reconciliation*. So safely and happily have you pass'd thro' them, that there needs nothing now but *your Perseverance* to be insisted on, 'till you come to your Crown of Glory.

VI.

Seeing God has used strange Arts and wonderful ways to *save* us, can we chuse but think he is desirous and willing *to do it*? Nay he declares it, and assures us of it, by his
Miracles

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Miracles and Oaths. And how is it possible we can then doubt of his acceptance of us, when we have perform'd the very *Terms and Conditions* on which he has declared he will save us. Nay, considering this too (what I have before hinted) That our Advocate will make the *most and the best* of all we have done in these *Terms and Conditions*.

To this I will add the words of a great Man yet living, in an Excellent Discourse of his: *We may be certain he will condemn none, whom according to the most favourable construction of the Terms of the Gospel he can save.*

VII.

Where-ever we meet with these Words [*Damnation,*] or [*shall not Inherit the Kingdom of God,*] or [*fearful looking for of Judgment,*] or the like, these dreadful words do.

not effect all that they there signifie to any but *the Impenitent* : For where-ever we find a *Curse* to the *Guilty* exprefs'd, in the same words, *Mercy* to the *Penitent* is understood.

Agreeable to this, I have Read, 'twas the Saying of *Mark* the devout Hermit ; * *No Man is ever justified, but he that carefully Repents ; and no Man is Condemned, but he that despises Repentance.*

And *St. Basil* (that Great Good Man) has a Saying to this purpose ; † *The Eye of God who is so great a lover of Souls, cannot deny the Intercessions and Litanies of Repentance.*

VIII.

Among all the *differences of Opinion* in other Matters of Religion, Men of all Sides and Parties unanimously and fully consent in what follows ; that is, That tho' a Man have

* Οὐδείς
ἀλεγεινὴν
ἐστὶν μὴ με-
τανόιας
ἀλεφερό-
νῃσι, καὶ ὁ
θεὸς, &c.

† Φιλάν-
θρωπον
ὁ βλέμμα
προσέσταν
εἰδεῖται
μετανοίαν.

have contradicted his *Christian Profession* in some things, yet this is a Truth wherein we all agree, that whosoever is a *true Penitent*, and purposes to *leave those Sins* whereby he has contradicted it, is by that *Repentance* restor'd to Friendship with God.

And most certainly it is a stranger thing that God should take upon him Hands and Feet, and those Hands and Feet should be nail'd upon a Cross, than that a Man should be partaker of the felicities of *Pardon*, and *Life Eternal*. And it were stranger yet, that God should do so much for Man, and yet that that Man that *desires* it, and *performs the Conditions*, and *labours* for it, and *begs* passionately for it, should miss *that End* for which God suffer'd so much as he did.

IX.

The *Jews* themselves have a Saying (in a Book of some Laws, Doctrines and Affairs of theirs called the *Talmud*) that the most *Just* and *Perfect Men* cannot be able to stand in Judgment with the *Penitents*. And one of their *Doctors* adds this further Observation upon that Saying, "That no Creature, no not the very *Angels* themselves, that never sinned, are able to compare with them.

Now 'tis certain we *Christians* must grant our *Hopes* are greater, and our *Promises* are clearer than ever any the *Jews* had. The *Covenant* of the Gospel, being a *Covenant* of Grace, and of *Repentance*, and being establish'd with so many great *Solemnities*, must signifie a huge *Favour*, and a mighty *Change* of Things.

And

And not only so, but God hath erected in his Church a whole *Order of Men*, the main part and dignity of *whose Work* 'tis to *remit and retain Sins*, by a perpetual and daily Ministry; and this they do, not only in *Baptism*, but in the *Blessed Eucharist* in *Sacerdotal Absolutions*, (all which, in much mercy you have received) and in the whole power of the Keys: And if God for the worst of Evils, hath appointed an Office of Ease and Pardon, which is, and may be daily Administred to the *reform'd Penitent*, and the *devout Believer*; surely then it will be an *unreasonable dissatisfaction* and *suspicion* of Gods goodness to fear that our Repentance shall be rejected, even although we have committed the greatest, or the worst of Evils.

X. I have

X.

I have observed, that a Devout Prelate of great Judgment and Sanctity of Life, upon that place of *St. Paul*, Rom. v. 10. *If when we were Enemies to God, &c.* has this Remark :

If God gives to Enemies the *first* Grace, much more will he give the *second*, if they make use of the *first*. From *None* to a *Little* is an infinite distance ; but from a *little* to a *great* deal, is not so much. And therefore since God hath given us means of Pardon, and the grace of Repentance, we may certainly expect the Fruit of Pardon ; for it is a greater thing to give *Repentance to a Sinner*, than to give *Pardon to the Penitent*.

Whoever Repents hath committed the *great Sin*, the more pardonable. For it is from the

Man,

Man, not from *the Sin*, that any Sin is unpardonable.

XI.

Can any Man suspect that God is indifferent whether Men be *Sav'd* or no, when he hath sent his Son to *Save* them? Can any Man imagine him *Implacable* and *Irreconcilable* towards those, whose *Nature* he sent his Son to take on him? Will any Man, can any Man think him *Implacable* and *Irreconcilable* to Sinners, to poor *Penitents*, who pitied them, and healed them, conversed with them, and died for them? To entertain therefore such unchristian degrees of Desperation, is to thrust away God's Arm from me, that would imbrace and receive me. For tho' I have strong Reasons to *Condemn my self*, yet I have more Reason to *Condemn my despair*; which therefore is unreasonable, because

* Josh. 7.
19.
Jer. 13. 16.
Rev. 16. 9.

because it is a Sin, and a dishonour to God. Whereas *Repentance* is the giving him Glory. And which shall I chuse to do, to despair and dishonour him, and *Sin* by it against him more, or to give him the * *Glory of my Repentance*, and cause Joy in Heaven; and let my Saviour see the *pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands*, by becoming a Reform'd Penitent.

Let Devils despair, who have not only no *Promises*, no *Remedy*, and no *Saviour*; but nothing pitiable in their Case; having had (1.) No Tempter to abuse them (2.) Who had no Flesh or Body to clogg them. (3.) No Infirmary to extenuate or lessen their Presumption, they are incapable of Repentance. But the chief *Design of the Gospel* was to Invite us to it; and the Design of Christ's very Dying was to procure it to be accepted, and to have it successful; and to

this

this day he now *Mediates* and *Interceeds* and *Pleads for it* in Heaven.

XII.

In the words of our Saviour out of *Isaiah*, (St. *Matth.* 13. 15.) it is affirmed, that when People are so obstinate, and wilfully Blind, that God then leaves to give them clearer Testimony and a mighty Grace, lest they should see, and hear, and understand; it follows, *and should be Converted, and I should heal them.* Plainly telling us, that if even *then* they *should Repent*, God could not but forgive; and therefore because he hath now no Love left to them, by reason of their former obstinacy, yet wherever you can suppose *Repentance*, there you may *more than suppose a Pardon.*

But

But if a Man cannot or will not Repent, then it is another Consideration.

In the mean time, nothing hinders, but that every Sin is pardonable, to him that Repents.

'Tis true indeed, there is one (and but one only) Sin declared not to be forgiven, that is, *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*; which was indeed the Sin of the *Pharisees*; but no Penitent Believer can be guilty of it.

For (as I have before hinted) no Man commits a *Sin against the Holy Ghost*, if he be afraid he hath, and desires he had not; for such Penitential Passions are against the Nature of that Sin.

Indeed for voluntary and malicious Apostates, Obstinate Impenitent Persons, their Estate is sad and dismal. But if we be overtaken with Infirmary, or enter into the Borders of this Estate, and commit a grievous

l no a grievous Sin, or ten, or twenty,
Conf so we be not in the intire possession
of the Devil, we are for the pre-
him sent in a damnable Condition if we
rdon die; but if we live, we are in a
recoverable Condition, for so we
may Repent often.

on And as by the Grace of God, we
clare shall certainly be *Pardon'd*, if we
e Si *Repent*, and Crown and Perfect it
a wa by *sincere Reformation*, and new
isees Obedience, and by *obtaining the*
n b *Contrary Vertues to the Sins repented*
of, in Evangelical, sincere, accept-
ted able measures, and living in them:
t th So our hope of Pardon is, just as is
hath the Repentance. Which if it be
such timely, hearty, industrious and
t th active (as I have reason to hope
yours certainly is) God accepts it;
mal not by weighing Grains or Scruples,
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o th A hearty Endeavour, and an ef-
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Pardon; the unavoidable Infirmities, and past Evils, and present Imperfections, and short Interruptions, against which we *Watch*, and *Pray*, and *Strive*, being put upon the Accounts of the Cross and pay'd by the Holy Jesus.

XIII.

Whoever *denies Christ*, shall assuredly be *denied* by him; yet still there is a tacit Condition in the words supposed, unless *Repentance* intervene. For this, and many other Scriptures, tho' as to their *formal Terms*, they are absolute yet as to their *Sense*, they are Conditional.

God in mercy has so fram'd and tempered his word, that we have for the most part a *Reserve of Mercy* wrapt up in a *Curse*; and the very first Judgment that was pronounced upon fallen Man, was with the Allay of a Promise.

So that (as I said before) *where-
soever we find a Curse to the Guilty
express'd, in the same words, mercy
to the Penitent is understood.*

XIV.

There is this further encourage-
ment for us to be good, and for the
sincere Penitent *to go on cheerfully*
in his new Obedience. The Judge
of all the World will at the Great
Day Candidly interpret Mens Ac-
tions, and make the very best of
things that the Case will bear ; our
Saviour hath told us, *his Yoke is
easie and his Burden light* ; and there
is nothing more contributes to make
them so, than his *Benignity of In-
terpretation*. For as no Laws are
tolerable, when they are rigorously
strain'd, and severely apply'd ; so
none are harsh and difficult, that
meet with a *fair and equitable In-
terpretation*.

H

And

And then on the other side, for the Failings and Infirmities of Men, this merciful Judge will make all the favourable allowances that can consist with Justice: He considers the weakness of our Judgments, the power of Temptation, the subtilty of Objections, the suddenness of our Passions, the disadvantage of our Constitution, the prevalence of Customs, the Contagion of Example; for this is our Happiness, he doth not only know our Nature and Circumstances, but hath felt all, or most of these things himself.

He hath not made all Transgressions alike Capital; he will not impute defects in our Duties, as willfull contempts of his Majesty; nor interpret a surprizal to be our choice, or our Infirmities and Follies to be presumptuous Sins. But whatever there may be of this kind, that can consist with a divine Life, with a sincere Love of God, and a true and hearty

heartly sense of Vertue and Goodness, shall not be rigidly aggravated against us.

Nay more than so, when Sin admits not of any of the aforesaid Mitigations, but hath been committed with an high hand, presumptuously, yet *even then*, upon the interposition of true and unfeigned Repentance, this Judge can (and will) mercifully Pardon also.

XV.

If we would diligently consider what the Scripture assures us of the greatness of Gods pardoning Mercy, we shall observe these three Remarkable Circumstances, all full of unspeakable Consolation to all *sincerely Reformed Penitents*.

1. He Pardons great and many Sins, not only lighter provocations.
2. He forgives repeated Follies, and relapsed Sinners.

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3. His

A Letter to

3. His Pardon is full and Absolute.

God Pardons Sinners so frankly, as that neither the greatness, multitude, repetition, or any other aggravation of sin hinders him ; and so fully, that no old score remains upon Record against the *truly*, the *sincerely Penitent Believer*.

And now to conclude this Letter, (which I am afraid you will think too long) you may from your own *sincerity* be confident (humbly confident) of this very thing, that he who

Phil. 1. 6. *hath begun a good work in you will perfect it*, until the day of Jesus Christ.

You owe to him all the good you have, and pray consider, there is more reason that he should perfect his own work, than there was that he should begin it.

You had never come to the measures, and degrees, and instances, and methods of Repentance you have done (that is, to a sense of your Sin,

to Humiliation, to Contrition, to holy Confession, to Priestly Absolution, and to the pious purposes and promises of new and better Obedience which you gave to God, and me ; all which you have Christianly pass'd thro³) had not this love and tenderness, and pity and mercy brought you to it, and his holy Spirit conducted you all the way.

After all this, see now what infinite and dear encouragement you have to *go on* with your *Repentance*, your *Care* and your *Watch*, as well as your *Obedience*, *Faith* and *Love* ; for your *Repentance* must not cease 'till your *Faith* does ; they must all along go together, 'till your *Faith* shall be swallowed up in *Vision* ; I mean your penitential abhorrence of *what's past*, is for ever to go on ; and your *Watch* and *Care* for the time *to come* is to be continued. For whatsoever falls short of a *Present*, *Universal Permanent Change*, falls as much short of
the

the truest and the best Repen-
tance.

And as I have reason to presume,
there is nothing more your Care,
Desire and Resolution, than *such a*
Change; so let these Considerations
fill you with a holy Joy, a religious
Peace, and affectionate Emotions of
your Soul to your merciful Redeemer.
By this time I hope you can with
such a *Peace*, and such a *Joy*, and
such *Emotions* bow the head, and
with *St. Peter*, and with Truth, say
to him, *Lord, thou knowest that I*
love thee.

That your Peace and Joy, and
holy Resolutions, your future Purity,
Probity and Sanctity of Life, and
your perseverance to Crown them all,
may be sincere, and great, and ac-
ceptably full, is prayed by

Your Affectionate Friend, and

Servant in our Lord Jesus

FINIS.

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the Red-Lion in St. Paul's Church-
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